



BRIEFING

21st century communications from the City of Bloomington

Volume 10, Number 6

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In a single cycle, how often is the average light on?

Red light 55%

Yellow light 5%

Green light 40%



Red light, green light

Drivers may not have noticed the difference, but 700 red bulbs and arrows in City-owned stoplights have been replaced with ones that save energy and money. Traffic Maintenance began swapping the incandescent bulbs with light-emitting diodes or LEDs in spring 2001. These electronic lights last from five to 10 years compared with traditional bulbs that last only about one year. Safety increases because the brighter LEDs are more visible and there is less bulb burnout. In addition, LEDs use only one-sixth as much electricity as the old bulbs which means big energy cost savings. Swapping the green lights with the new LEDs is currently in progress. For more information, call Traffic Maintenance at 952-563-4585. ♦

Voting improvements considered

A number of factors, including redistricting, produced unusually long waits for voters at a handful of Bloomington's 26 precincts during this past November's State General Election. The City apologizes to those who waited in long lines, particularly seniors and voters with physical limitations, as well as to those who became discouraged and left.

During Election Day, the City added voting booths and made layout changes to alleviate the effects of a heavy turnout. In Bloomington, 73.4 percent of our registered voters cast ballots.

Studying alternatives

Steps are being taken to remedy the situation and return to voting experiences that are consistent with prior elections. In response to requests from the Mayor and City Council, the City is studying several alternatives for improving the process. At a November Council meeting, possible improvements presented were:

- ◆ Reduce precinct sizes.
- ◆ Change polling places, if necessary.
- ◆ Add precinct judges (who are paid volunteers.)
- ◆ Provide additional voting equipment.
- ◆ Change layout and procedures in affected precincts.
- ◆ Improve service

Analysis of the successful voter experiences in a large number of Bloomington's precincts will determine how to improve the overall process. The City continually works hard to improve services and is committed to making sure the voting process goes more smoothly in future elections.

For more information, contact the Voter Registration at 952-563-8729. ♦

Facilities Update

Cedar colonnade frames City Hall's main entrance

As the weather turns colder and snow starts to fall, construction crews move indoors to work on the new Police/City Hall/Arts Center. Currently contractors at the 98th Street and Old Shakopee Road site are applying interior materials which include sheetrock and paint, as well as installing electrical, plumbing and mechanical runs. Minimal work is occurring outside as crews wrap up stone, roofing and glass applications. Unfinished exterior work and landscaping will be finished when spring arrives.

Cedar columns

Standing just outside of the main City Hall entrance are 34 steel posts. See photo above right. Cedar will be applied to these 30-foot structures to create wooden columns. There will also be five 12-foot high cedar columns outside the Police Department entrance.

Entrance design

The columns mimic a marble colonnade that might stand in front of a traditional government building. However, these columns are made of wood to represent the natural environment of Bloomington. Native plants, including black-eyed susans and blueberry, juniper and dogwood shrubs, will be planted under a lattice trellis that will cover the top of the columns.

The wood

Grown only in southern Oregon, Port Orford Cedar

forms the columns. A member of the cypress family, this species is particularly hard and strong. Historically, Port



mately two weeks to install the cedar columns. Work begins this spring.

Description

The facility will house Police and City administrative functions, underground parking for Police vehicles and an arts center including performing and visual arts space. The main customer service areas and City Council Chambers are on the east side overlooking a landscaped area and pond. The facility will open to serve the public in early summer 2003.

For more information, call Clark Arneson at 952-563-8921 or e-mail carneson@ci.bloomington.mn.us. ♦

From our "family" to yours –
Have a happy, healthy and safe holiday season!

This issue contains safety tips from City departments. Please take a few minutes to read them. The following are ideas for building a sense of community while brightening the holidays for everyone:

- ◆ Throw a neighborhood party and include elderly neighbors or others who might be lonely.
- ◆ Form a caroling group to sing at a nursing home.
- ◆ Offer to help older adults with shopping and home decoration activities.
- ◆ Give to your favorite charity. ♦

City of Bloomington
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Mayor Gene Winstead

"We can provide all of the fire safety information sheets, coloring books and training videos that classrooms can hold, but if parents don't encourage their kids to bring home these educational messages, practice escape drills and personalize the potential danger, fire will continue to take lives and destroy property."

Fire Marshal
Bob James

Bloomington's Fire Prevention Division saves lives

It's the middle of the night. Your house is dark and filling with smoke. The smoke detector begins to blare. Does your child know how to get out?

This was a scenario put together by reporter Trish Van Pilsum, with the help of the Bloomington Fire Prevention Division and Fire Department, for a "Dimension" series on WCCO-TV. Four Bloomington families and a child psychologist from Poplar Bridge Elementary School participated in the at-home fire drill that occurred after the children were asleep. The videotaped results were disappointing. When the four children awoke to what seemed like a real fire, not one could escape.

National recognition

The video won several awards and was included in the National Fire Protection Association's fire awareness toolkit delivered to fire departments around the country. Bloomington's Fire Marshal Bob James is distributing the video to Bloomington schools for their health and safety programs.

The video, however, is targeted to adults in the hopes that it will bring home the message that adults need to practice escape routes with their families. Children practice fire drills in school, but there is an urgent need for

Public education

Bloomington Fire Prevention plays a key role in helping kids, residents and businesses know what to do in case of a fire. The Division teams up with the 155 members of Bloomington's all-volunteer Fire Department to minimize loss of life and damage to property through fire education and prevention efforts.



them to learn what a smoke detector sounds like and how to escape at home, where most fires occur.

Innovative programs

Because of efforts like this video project and other innovative programs, Bloomington is recognized as one of the leading cities in fire prevention and safety activities. One such program is "RiskWatch," an injury prevention program for children and families.

For children under age 14, injuries are the number one health risk. "RiskWatch" is a pilot program taught in health classes at Valley View and Poplar Bridge elementary schools. Lessons teach motor vehicle safety, fire and burn prevention, water safety, firearms injury prevention and more. Bloomington is one of only seven cities statewide to

receive funding for this program. By next year, the goal is to have every school in Bloomington, and eventually the entire state, incorporate "RiskWatch" into their health and safety curriculum.

Importance of fire prevention

Fortunately the scenario in the WCCO video has a happy ending. After practicing their escape routes, all of the children made it out successfully during another fire drill. This emphasizes that education, training and practice at home with their family can save lives. I encourage all parents to contact their child's school to view a copy of the video.

If you have questions on public education activities, code compliance or fire and arson investigations, call Bloomington Fire Prevention at 952-563-8933. ♦



Code enforcement

Fire Prevention protects public health and safety by ensuring compliance with state and city codes. Each year the division conducts more than 6,000 inspections of commercial and industrial buildings, hotels, schools and multi-family dwellings to make sure they meet fire safety codes. This includes new construction and inspections of existing buildings.



Fire and arson investigation

The Fire Prevention Division works with the Fire Department to investigate all fires in Bloomington and determine cause and origin. They work with Police to investigate arson. The five members of Fire Prevention staff, including the Fire Marshal, are on call around the clock to respond to a fire.

Bloomington City Council

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Photographs of elected officials are presented by the City of Bloomington for informational purposes only.

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Visit our Web site at www.ci.bloomington.mn.us.

The **Briefing**, a bimonthly newsletter published by the municipal government organization of the City of Bloomington, Minnesota, is mailed to Bloomington residents and businesses. Direct comments or suggestions to Communications Administrator Diann Kirby, City of Bloomington, 2215 W. Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington MN 55431-3096; phone 952-563-8818; TTY 952-563-8740; FAX 952-563-8715; e-mail dkirby@ci.bloomington.mn.us. If you require Braille, larger print or computer disk, contact Diann Kirby, 952-563-8818.

The City of Bloomington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status or status with regard to public assistance in employment or the provision of services. • The City of Bloomington does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs or activities. Upon request, accommodation will be provided to allow individuals with disabilities to participate in all City of Bloomington services, programs and activities. The City has designated coordinators to facilitate compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as required by Section 35.107 of the U.S. Department of Justice Regulations, and to coordinate compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as mandated by Section 8.53 of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Regulations. For information, contact the Human Services Division, City of Bloomington, 2215 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington MN 55431-3096; phone: 952-563-8700; TTY: 952-563-8740.



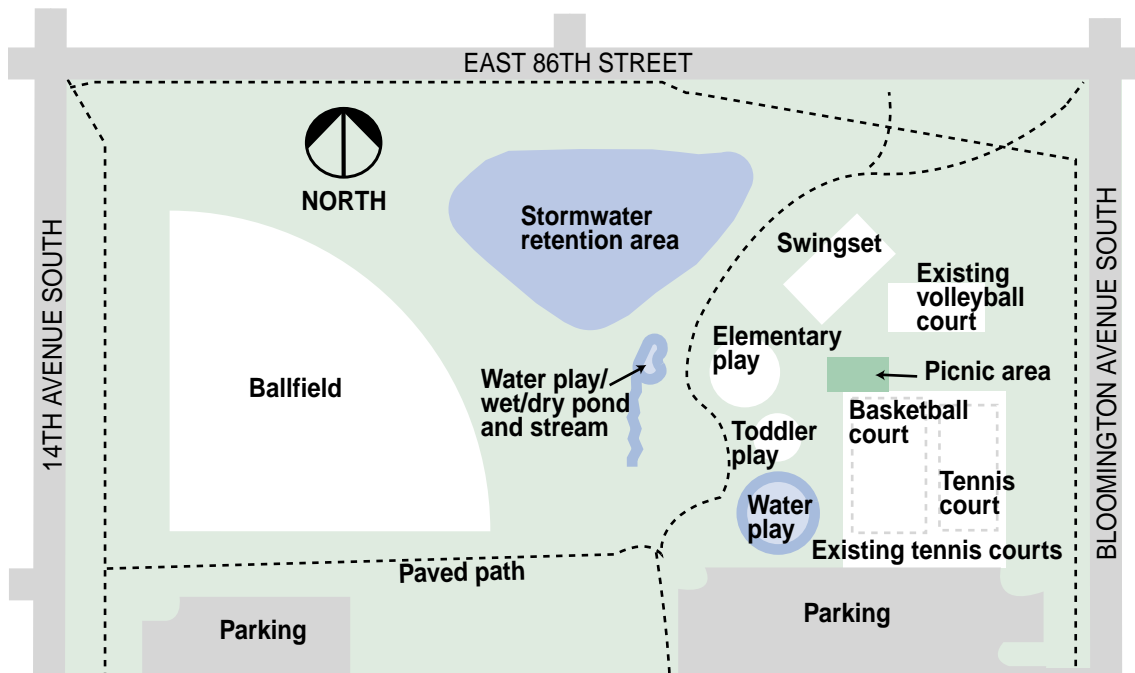
Park Developments

For more information on the park redevelopment projects, call Lance Anderson at 952-563-8738.

Cedarcrest Park redevelopment

Construction documents are in progress for the future redevelopment of Cedarcrest Park at 86th Street and Bloomington Avenue South. Proposed construction work at the six-acre park will include:

- ◆ Grading an eastern portion of the site.
 - ◆ Installation of swings and play equipment.
 - ◆ Excavation and concrete curbing for play areas.
 - ◆ Bituminous pathways.
 - ◆ A water play area.
 - ◆ Picnic tables.
 - ◆ Benches.
 - ◆ Landscaping.
- Grading the remainder of the site, reconfiguring the softball field, installation of a stormwater retention area and landscaping are planned for the future. ◆



"Reel" fun at Smith Park



Eager anglers can bait hooks and cast off the Smith Park pier.



A 64-foot floating pier now resides on the southeast side of the pond at Smith Park, 8155 Park Avenue South. The pier was installed last August in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to

promote their urban fishing program. The DNR will annually stock the pond with crappies and bluegills. By summer 2003, the City will install a short segment of asphalt pathway to make the pier fully accessible. ◆

Please, do not feed the geese

Canadian geese and other waterfowl flock to the shores of urban lakes, attracted by lush, short grasses, open water and the promise of easy meals. The amount of food and territory available determines the number of wild geese in the area. Dense concentrations of waterfowl cause problems including:

- ◆ Soil erosion along the shoreline that contributes to poor water quality.
- ◆ Bird droppings that contain nitrogen, phosphorus and bacteria run off into our water bodies causing excessive plant and algae growth.
- ◆ Accidental ingestion of droppings by young children and pets.

Human foods are harmful to birds

Help create a healthier, balanced wildlife population in Bloomington parks by not feeding the waterfowl. In addition to human and environmental concerns, feeding



can harm waterfowl which feed naturally on small crustaceans, aquatic plants and grasses. Studies have shown that highly processed foods, such as bread and crackers, can cause digestive problems, ulcers and disease in birds.

Vegetation management

Public Works has been working to find the best solution to waterfowl overpopulation. Through shoreland restoration efforts, crews have planted taller,

native vegetation that makes these areas less attractive to waterfowl.

Healthier alternative

Enjoy Canadian geese and other wildlife while respecting their health. Instead of feeding waterfowl, watch their natural behavior through binoculars and you may see less familiar bird species that use the parks and lakes during migration.

For more information, call 952-563-4633. ◆



Tip #1

Safe holidays are the happiest!

Here are some tips from the Bloom-

ington Police Department on how to have a safe and crime-free holiday season.

While shopping

- ◆ When visiting stores after dark, shop with a companion. Park in a well-lit parking lot at night.
- ◆ Always lock car doors and windows when parking. Lock packages in the trunk of your vehicle.
- ◆ Avoid carrying large amounts of cash. Pay for purchases with checks or credit cards when possible. Carry only those credit cards that you plan to use.
- ◆ Carry your purse under your arm or your wallet in an inside jacket pocket.

At work

- ◆ Lock up gifts you buy during lunch hours.
- ◆ Avoid high consumption of alcohol during holiday office parties. Offer to drive coworkers home if they have had too much to drink.

In your neighborhood

- ◆ Offer to pick up mail and newspapers or shovel sidewalks and driveways for neighbors who will be out of town. ◆



Transportation Update

Wet weather slowed summer street construction

Persistent and heavy rains dampened street construction projects last summer. According to the National Weather Service, rainfall during the months of June through August at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport totaled more than 21 inches, ranking last summer as the fourth wettest in modern record.

Traffic congestion

It was a long and very difficult summer for construction crews, City staff, residents and drivers. The 2002 season was scheduled to have a significant amount of construction. Time-consuming utility replacement and heavily trafficked streets required that construction be done in phases.

To alleviate congestion, staff coordinated projects to allow some traffic movement, particularly at the intersection of Old Shakopee Road and Normandale Boulevard. As early July approached, traffic flow to and from the north leg of Normandale was to resume. As rain delayed this portion of the project, the City needed to begin its scheduled construction in the area, causing more traffic congestion.

Weather delays

When the weather was good, construction crews were not always on site. After a heavy rain, crews had to wait until the saturated soils dried out. While the City has limited the number of closed streets at one time on its street projects, it does not fully control private contractors' work. Contractors often have many jobs in Bloomington and throughout the metro area that need to be completed in warm weather. An extra wet year finds them trying to catch up on projects in which they have fallen behind.

For more information, call Engineering at 952-563-4866. ◆



Early and often heavy rainfall slowed the Old Shakopee Road and Normandale Boulevard street construction by four to six weeks. A large amount of rainfall has had a greater impact on construction in the western portion of Bloomington where the land is predominately clay and retains more water than the sandier soil to the east.

PARKS, RECREATION & ARTS UPDATE

For more information, call Parks and Recreation at 952-563-8877.

Adult Sports

Adult tennis drills

Instructed by a certified teaching professional, drills are practice sessions to improve stroke production. Facilities include locker rooms, showers, sauna, whirlpool, steam room, swimming pool, indoor track and exercise room.

When: January 8 - February 13 or
February 19 - March 27.

Times: Beginner Wednesdays 6 - 7 p.m.
Intermediate Thursdays 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Where: 98th Street Northwest Athletic Club.

Cost: \$51 for six one-hour lessons.

Limit: Six per class; minimum four.

Register: Call Parks and Recreation.

Daytime volleyball

All games are played at the Bloomington Armory, 3300 West 98th Street. Feel free to show up alone; teams are formed on the spot each week.

Dates: Tuesdays and Thursdays, beginning January 2.

Time: 9:30 - 11 a.m.

Cost: \$1.25 each session.

Youth Activities

Bloomington Athletic Association (BAA)

BAA Information Hotline: 952-888-0807

(Look for your Hotline mailbox number below.)

Web site: www.baaonline.org

Month	No.	Activity	Grade/Age
January	18	Boys and Girls Indoor Soccer	Grades K - 2
	21	Girls Volleyball	Grades 4 - 12
Boys and Girls Baseball Programs:			
March	11	Mini-Mite	Age 4 - 5*
		*Must be age 4 by 9/1/02	
	11	In-House	Grades K - 8
	11	Majors	Grades 9 - 11
	20	Girls Softball	Grades 1 - 8
	20	Co-Rec Softball	Grades 9 - 12

Registration dates are available on the BAA Information Line. The *BAA Update* is distributed in the Bloomington Public Schools and these private schools: Nativity of Mary, Mt. Hope Redemption, Bethany Academy, Minnehaha Academy, Bloomington Christian School and Bloomington Lutheran. Residents with children attending other schools can call the BAA Information Hotline and request to be put on the BAA mailing list.

Hockey

BAA Ice Hockey provides the opportunity for all Bloomington youth, ages 4-1/2 - 16 (Mites through Junior Gold B), to learn skating skills and play hockey. Teams play District 6 Hockey games in the Bloomington Ice Garden. In February BAA will host a Pee Wee C Hockey Tournament with teams from around Minnesota. For more information, call Jerry Kaley at 952-854-1970 or visit www.baaonline.org.

The **Bloomington Amateur Hockey Association** welcomes interested boys and girls, ages 5 - 18, who would like to learn the game and belong to a strong Minnesota hockey tradition. Tournaments will be held at the Bloomington Ice Garden:

◆ **Regional Holiday Tournament, December 26 - 31.**

◆ **The Bloomington Squirt Invitational, January 15 - 19.**

For more information, call Doug Munn at 952-884-7036 or visit www.bloomingtonhockey.com. ◆

Help wanted

Girls Softball Director

For more information, call Kevin Hauer 952-853-1420.

Indoor Soccer Director

For more information, call John Marshall 952-888-7973. ◆



The Adaptive Recreation & Learning Exchange (AR&LE) provides opportunities for individuals with disabilities to participate in recreational, social and educational programs. These opportunities are for people with varied ability levels in specially designed programs that meet their needs. A detailed quarterly brochure is available by calling 952-563-8899. ◆

BLOOMINGTON LOVES ITS KIDS

This month-long series of events combines community and family fun with educational programs and ceremonies to honor organizations who help kids and kids who help others. Parks and Recreation, Bloomington Public Schools, Bloomington United for Youth and many other community groups call upon residents to join in the celebration of our children.

Please sponsor activities that foster the mission of Bloomington Loves Its Kids. To participate, call Chad Duerkop at 952-563-8877.

Kick-Off

Thursday, January 30
6:30 p.m.

Knott's Camp Snoopy,
Mall of America

Recognition Ceremony
for those who have done something special
to benefit our community!

◆ Youth ◆
◆ Volunteer Groups ◆
◆ Volunteer organizations that serve youth ◆

Community Carnival

Saturday, February 22
12:30 - 3 p.m.

Northwestern Health Sciences
University, 84th and Penn

Includes:

◆ Entertainment ◆ Exhibits ◆
◆ Multi-Cultural Event ◆ Pie Walk ◆
◆ Preschool Play Room ◆
◆ AND ◆
◆ Much ◆ Much ◆ More! ◆



Holiday Open House

Where: Gideon H. Pond House,
Pond-Dakota Mission Park, 401 East 104th Street.

When: Sunday, December 15.

Time: 1:30 p.m. - 4 p.m.

◆ House tours.
◆ Holiday music and hymn singing.
◆ Historic Pond sermon reading from Christmas past at 2 p.m.
◆ Refreshments.

Cost: \$3.

For more information, call 952-563-8881. ◆

Winter Fete

Parks and Recreation is planning winter festival activities, which include:

◆ Ice fishing contest. ◆ Sleigh rides.
◆ Softball tournament. ◆ Carnival.
◆ Build your own snowshoes at the Pond House.

When: Thursday - Saturday, January 23 - 25.

Where: Various locations in Bloomington.

For more information, call Parks and Recreation or visit our Web site at www.ci.bloomington.mn.us. ◆



Bloomington Art Center (BAC)

10206 Penn Avenue South
Phone 952-563-4777.

A multigenerational cast of local actors will bring to life this timeless holiday classic of a mother and daughter who rediscover the true spirit of Christmas.

December 13 performance will be American Sign Language interpreted.

Call the BAC for more information.

BAC Gallery Players presents "Miracle on 34th Street"

When: 3 p.m. Saturdays, Dec. 8, 15, 21
7:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 6
7 p.m. Thursdays, Dec. 12, 19
Fridays, Dec. 13, 20
Saturdays, Dec. 7, 14

Where: Northwestern Health Science University,
84th and Penn Ave. S.

Cost: \$10 Adults.
\$8 Seniors/students/BAC members.
\$6 Children 12 and under.
Groups of 20 or more receive a 20 percent discount.